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UNCLAS MUSCAT 001634

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD, NEA/P, AND INR/R/MR

LONDON FOR TSOU
PARIS FOR ZEYA
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER FOR SILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ/SYRIA AND ISRAEL/PALESTINE

History Repeats

[1](#)1. The government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" ran an editorial on October 31 entitled "Will The Iraq Scenario Be Repeated?":

"Perhaps the fears of Syria's Deputy Foreign Minister are justified regarding a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force against Damascus, particularly in the wake of the Mehliis Report. But the international community has a moral and legal responsibility to prevent another mistake like the search for WMD in Iraq. The Syrian government demonstrated its readiness to cooperate and hold accountable those who might be responsible for Hariri's death. Wisdom dictates that superpowers like the U.S. should deal with these matters diplomatically and give the investigating committee more time. Washington recognizes the dangers of preemptive war, and perhaps the lesson of Iraq will be enough."

United We Stand

[1](#)2. The privately owned Arabic daily "al-Watan" published an editorial on October 30 entitled "Are The Arabs Still Unified?":

"Tensions in the region are increasing day after day, and more challenges and risks are presenting themselves. The most urgent problem is the U.S. administration's focus on Damascus, given Syria's alleged involvement in the Hariri assassination and their alleged support of terrorists in Iraq. Arab solutions are needed for these problems, but the Arabs have become tired of appealing to their leaders every day without any result. Yet, it is not too late to call for a unified Arab response, or to ask the most influential Arab countries to show their support for Syria."

Riding The Escalators

[1](#)3. "Al-Watan" also featured an editorial on October 29 under the headline "Serious Escalation In Palestine":

"Recently, Israel conducted air and land raids on the Gaza Strip, designed to inflict the heaviest possible losses on the Palestinians. Although Israel has been told many times over the past years that such practices would not result in stopping the Palestinian struggle, it seems that Tel Aviv intends to push forward with disavowing its commitments to the peace process. Thus, Israel bears full responsibility for this continuous and dangerous escalation of the situation in the Gaza Strip. It is very important for the international community to move quickly in order to put an end to these criminal Israeli practices."

BALTIMORE